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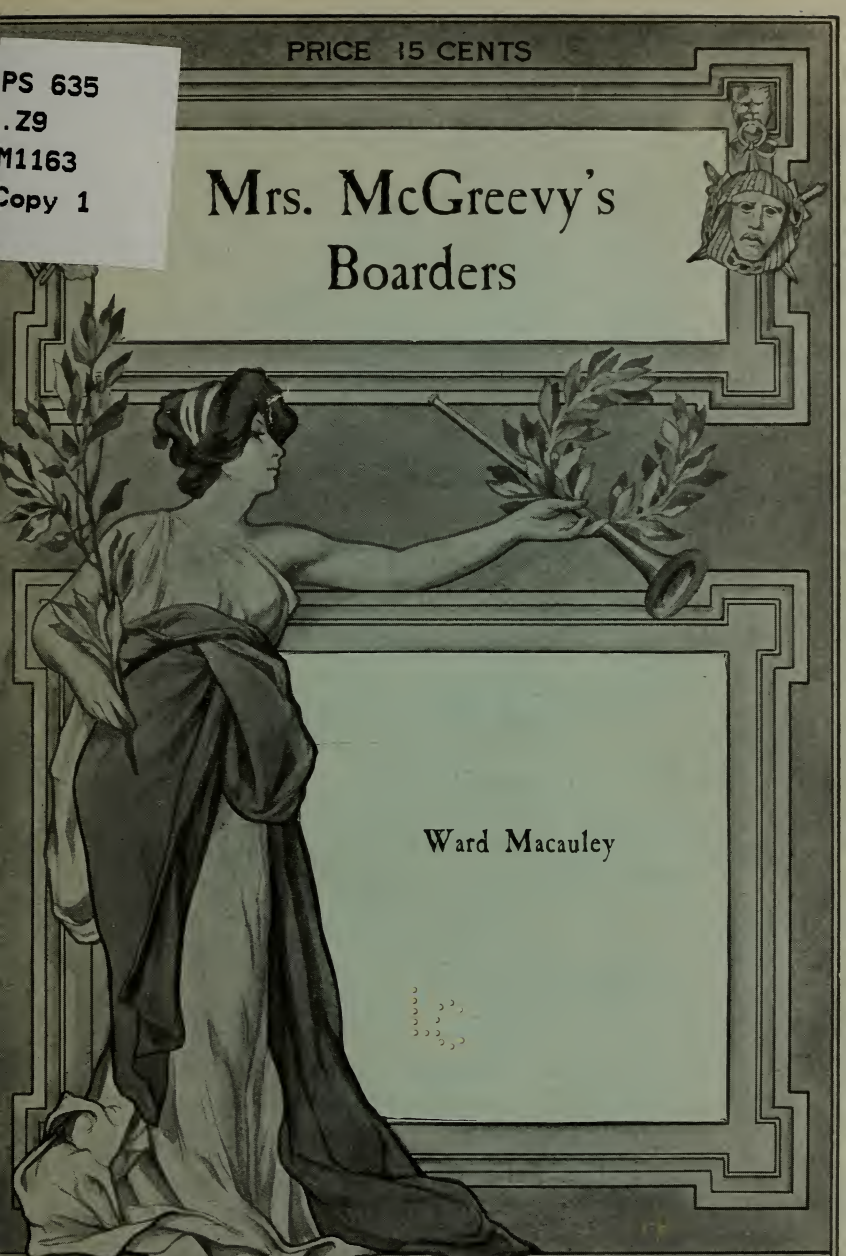
Mrs. McGreevy's Boarders



Ward Macauley

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Mrs. McGreevy's Boarders

BY

Ward Macauley

Author of "The Surprise Party at Brinkley's,"
"The Church Bazaar at Mulberry Corners,"
"Graduation Day at Woodhill School," etc.

PHILADELPHIA
THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY
1913

PS635
Z9M1163

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JUN 24 1915

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Mrs. McGreevy's Boarders

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Mrs. McGreevy	*proprietor of the boarding-house*
Joel Lembkin	*an old bachelor*
Jennie Loveman	*a maiden lady*
Joshua Swallow	*strictly business*
Jerry Farraway	*long of reach*
Tom Headley	*of some importance*
Felicia Rogers	*a gusher*
Alfred Owen	*back on his rent*
Genevieve Ransom	*a new boarder*
Amanda	*a maid*
Mr. Grump	*a dissatisfied soul*

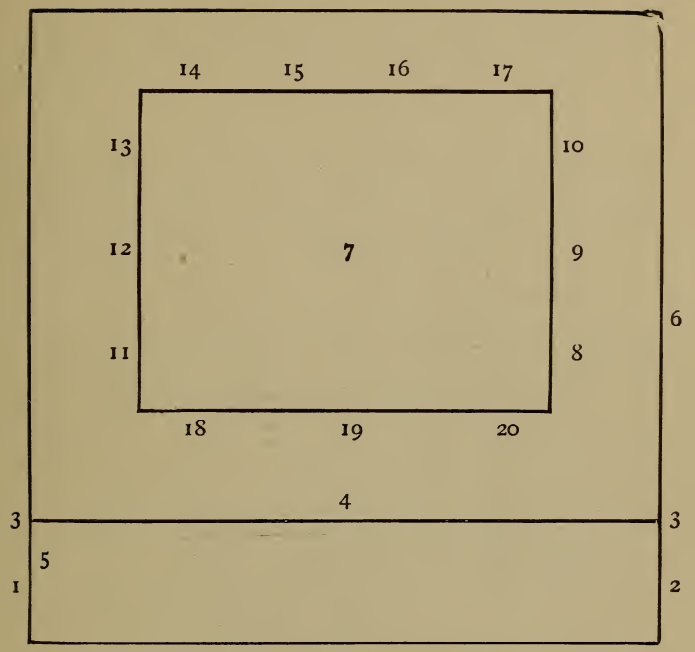
DIRECTIONS

Every care should be used in selecting suitable persons for the various parts. Mrs. McGreevy is large, Amanda also and somewhat dowdy. Miss Loveman is forty, likewise Mr. Lembkin. Tom and Jerry are rather fresh young men of twenty-five. Mr. Swallow is middle-aged, Mr. Grump elderly. Owen is a young man. Felicia and Genevieve are twenty. Suitable costuming should be aimed at without any necessity for anything of a burlesque nature except in the case of Amanda. Tom and Jerry should be a trifle swagger, Owen a bit shabby-genteel, Grump and Swallow careless, not to say untidy. Others should dress fairly well, Felicia with a slight taste for color. Every effort should be made to give the proper color to the situation and to read the lines intelligently. Properly carried out, "Mrs. McGreevy's Boarders" should make an effective entertainment. It is by all means essential that real food be served and eaten in a realistic manner.

STORY OF THE PLAY

A typical six o'clock dinner scene at Mrs. McGreevy's is portrayed. The various guests and their eccentricities are set forth. Mr. Lembkin and Miss Loveman have been the butt of the jokes of Tom and Jerry. It is alleged that their similar inclinations ought to fit them for matrimony. Mr. Lembkin, falsely reputed a woman-hater, decides that what they have sneeringly said in jest may very well be true in fact and Miss Loveman decides she is of the same opinion. Jerry asks a momentous question of Felicia and announces that she is to be the future Mrs. Farraway. A happy ending for all except Mrs. McGreevy, who fears the loss of four boarders.

SCENE PLOT



1.—Entrance.
2.—Entrance.
3.—Curtains, to be drawn back.
4.—Entrance through curtains when closed.
5.—Piano.
6.—Exit to kitchen.
7.—Table.
8.—Mr. Swallow.
9.—Mr. Owen.
10.—Mr. Grump.
11.—Jerry.
12.—Felicia.
13.—Genevieve.
14.—Tom.
15.—Mrs. McGreevy.
16.—Mr. Lembkin.
17.—Miss Loveman.
18.
19.— } Unoccupied chairs at table.
20.

Other furnishings of a suitable nature. In pulling curtains aside be sure to pull far over to points (3) so that those at the side of auditorium may see well.

Mrs. McGreevy's Boarders

SCENE.—MRS. MCGREEVY'S *boarding-house, back-parlor and dining-room. At the opening, curtains across conceal the dining-room until drawn aside by* MRS. MCGREEVY *as indicated in the text. See Scene Plot.*

(*Enter* MRS. MCGREEVY *and* GENEVIEVE RANSOM, 2.)

MRS. M. I'm glad our terms is satisfactory. We keep a first-class boarding-house and we'll be glad to have you come. You can stay right now if you want to.

GENEVIEVE. I do want to. I'm not very hungry, though.

MRS. M. (*hastily*). We don't make any allowance for meals missed.

GENEVIEVE. But if one eats ever so little?

MRS. M. It makes no diff'rence. Everything's strictly table de hoty; nothing a la carty.

GENEVIEVE (*perplexed*). Oh!

MRS. M. It's like this. Mebbe your appetite ain't good to-night. Well, mebbe Tom Headley's'll be a little better'n usual. Then there's Swallow—his is allus good. I never see but one feller with a better appetite and that was (*local name*). Why, to-day I was reminded of Swallow when I seen a movin' van going past ——

GENEVIEVE. A moving van?

MRS. M. Yes. It said on it, "National Storage Company. Capacity Unlimited." Well, that's Swallow for you. Good land, if they was all like him, I'd be bankrupt! So, there's strictly no deduction for meals missed, and while I ain't wishin' anybody bad luck, I ain't so awful sympathetic when they're off their feed, so to speak.

GENEVIEVE. I'm sure I shall like it here.

MRS. M. You will, my dear, you will, 'specially if you minds the rules and pays up prompt on Monday. Gettin' behind is the start of everything unpleasant.

GENEVIEVE. I'll try to remember ——

MRS. M. Oh, I'll r'mind you all right, if ne'ssary. I like these little points understood. Then there's no back-bitings afterward.

GENEVIEVE. I always admired frankness.

MRS. M. You'll like me, then.

GENEVIEVE. What time do you serve supper?

MRS. M. Supper? Supper? My dear, this is a first-class boarding-house. We do not serve supper. We have a six o'clock dinner—at six promptly, remember. They serve supper at places like Mrs. McGill's, but this here place is good s'ciety.

GENEVIEVE. I think I'll go to my room a minute before sup—dinner.

MRS. M. Be down on the dot, r'member.

GENEVIEVE. I will.

(*Exit* GENEVIEVE, 1. MRS. M. *arranges music on piano.*)

(*Enter* MR. ALFRED OWEN, 2. *He endeavors to sneak through without attracting attention.* MRS. M. *sees him, however.*)

MRS. M. I've been waiting for you, Mr. Owen.

MR. O. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. M. Don't "yes ma'am" me. When are you going to pay up? That's what I want to know.

MR. O. Why, I'm expecting a remitt ——

MRS. M. Remittance? Well, my observation's been they don't ever come. Mail's delayed or something 'n' I've been in the boarding-house business twenty years.

MR. O. You can see for yourself, ma'am. (*He takes out an old purse and shows it to be empty.*) If I had it, I'd give it to you.

MRS. M. What good does that do me? Does looking at an empty pocketbook help pay grocers' bills or buy a side o' pork? No, sir, I've got to come over with the good hard cash; and if my boarders don't pay me, where am I at? That's what I want to know; where am I at?

MR. O. I will gladly pay you interest, ma'am.

MRS. M. Interest? The man thinks I'm a money-lender. No, sir, I'm a boarding-house keeper; not one of these here loan-fishes or whatever you call 'em. No, sir, I'm a-warnin' you. If you don't pay up by next Monday,

I'll expect you to help Amanda with the dishes and I'll ask you in front of the whole table; and the next week if you don't toe the mark, I'll put a "Room for rent" sign in the front window.

MR. O. (*depressed*). Very well ——

MRS. M. An' I ain't joking, neither. An' 'nother thing, please remember for the present no second helpings.

MR. O. Very well, ma'am.

(*Exit*, 1.)

MRS. M. (*calling loudly through curtains* 4). Amanda, Amanda, did you keep your eye on that roast beef? And how is the oyster stew coming?

(*Exits hastily*, 4.)

(*Enter* MR. JOEL LEMBKIN *and* MISS JENNIE LOVEMAN, 2.)

MR. L. As I was saying, Miss Loveman, it was awfully nice that we could come home together.

MISS L. It was pleasant, but I hope none of the other boarders saw us.

MR. L. Why? Not ashamed of it, I hope.

MISS L. (*laughing*). Not a bit; but you know how they tease us. Without the slightest ground, too ——

MR. L. I don't see whatever put it into their heads. Boarders are a queer lot. They have to joke a certain amount to forget they are boarders.

MISS L. And especially when you are such a woman-hater.

MR. L. (*aside*). Me a woman-hater! (*To* MISS L.) Yes, especially.

MISS L. And when I gave up all idea of marriage long ago.

MR. L. (*uncomfortable*). I wish I could find something to tease them all about.

MISS L. Well, I must fix up a bit before dinner. Besides, some one might see us.

MR. L. Let them. They can't tease a bit more than they do already.

(MISS L. *moves to exit*, 1.)

(*Enter* JERRY FARRAWAY, 2.)

JERRY. Oh, I beg your pardon. I hope I don't intrude.

Really, I wouldn't disturb this little tête-à-tête for all the world.

(*Moves to bow himself out* 2, *with elaborate courtesy.*)

Miss L. Don't be absurd, Jerry; we just happened to come in together.

Jerry. Hoity-toity! I know how 'tis, been through it m'self. Two's company, three's a crowd. Never catch me playing the part of the unwelcome younger brother.

Miss L. (*sternly*). Keep still, Jerry Farraway, or I shall be very angry.

Jerry. Ah, a little tiff, eh? And you want to take your spite out on me. Come, now, kiss and make up. Never let the sun go down on your wrath.

Mr. L. (*uncomfortable*). We haven't quarreled, Jerry.

Jerry (*holding out his hand impulsively*). Congratulations, old man. Then it's all fixed up? Bully for you.

Mr. L. No, it isn't all ——

Jerry (*to* Miss L., *pleadingly*). Don't turn him down. He's a good fellow.

(Miss L. *turns and flounces angrily out of the room*, 1.)

Mr. L. Look here, why do you annoy us all the time?

Jerry. D'you want to know?

Mr. L. Certainly, or I wouldn't ask.

Jerry. Well, then, because you're so easy teased I think there's something in it.

Mr. L. I'm too old for any nonsense of that sort.

Jerry (*sternly*). Nonsense of what sort?

Mr. L. (*reddening*). Why, love-making and—and ——

Jerry (*still sternly*). And marriage, I suppose? (Mr. L. *nods doubtfully.*) I will have you understand, sir, that marriage is no nonsense, sir. I shall report what you say to the assembled guests this evening.

Mr. L. Oh, let up, will you?

Jerry. I cannot conceal the truth. Well, old man, I'll remove a little of Smith and Company's dust before dinner.

Mr. L. Guess I will myself.

Jerry. I'll beat you to it.

(*Hurries off* 1, *followed slowly by* Mr. L.)

(*Enter* Mrs. M., 4, *followed by* Amanda.)

MRS. M. Now, you're sure everything's all ready before I ring the bell?

AMANDA. Yes'm.

MRS. M. You're two minutes late. Don't let it occur again.

AMANDA. Yes'm.

MRS. M. "Yes'm"?

AMANDA. Yes'm.

MRS. M. "Yes'm" what?

AMANDA. Yes'm, don't let it occur again.

MRS. M. You should say "no, ma'am."

AMANDA. Yes'm.

MRS. M. What?

AMANDA. Yes'm, I had oughter say "no, ma'am."

MRS. M. (*exasperated*). Don't you know anything?

AMANDA. No, ma'am. If I did I'd be a sternogafer and make eight a week instead o' slingin' hash.

MRS. M. Amanda, we do not sling hash. This is a first-class boarding-house.

AMANDA. Yes'm.

(MRS. M. *motions* AMANDA *to draw the curtains* 4, *revealing the dining-room at the rear of the stage. Care should be taken to pull curtains wide apart.* AMANDA *then exits* 6. (*From this point* AMANDA'S *entrances and exits are at* 6.) MRS. M. *then rings a bell lustily.*)

(*Enter* MR. JOSHUA SWALLOW, 2, *sharpening his pencil.*)

MR. S. Is dinner ready?

MRS. M. That's the idee of the bell, Mr. Swallow. Oh, Amanda!

(*Enter* AMANDA.)

AMANDA. Yes'm.

MRS. M. Bring in the carpet-sweeper.

AMANDA. I done this here room last Saturday.

MRS. M. Never mind. Do as I say.

AMANDA. Yes'm. (*Exit* AMANDA. MR. S. *continues sharpening his pencil. Enter* AMANDA *with carpet-sweeper.*) Yes'm.

(*Enter* MR. O., 1, GENEVIEVE, 1, TOM HEADLEY, 2, *and* FELICIA ROGERS, 2.)

MRS. M. (*to* AMANDA). Wait till Mr. Swallow is through.
MR. S. Quite through, ma'am. Let's sit down.

(AMANDA *operates the carpet-sweeper and exits.*)

TOM. Yes, I got another boost to-day. Fourth this year. I'm assistant to the general manager, now. Pushed my salary up twenty a week.
FELICIA. Isn't that just lovely?

(*Enter* MR. L., JERRY *and* MISS L., 1.)

TOM. Yes, I expect I'll be the general manager soon. Why, Smithers down to the Amalgamated was saying only yesterday, "Tom, a man like you belongs at the top of the heap. You don't need take anybody's leavings."
MR. S. That's all right, but how about dinner?
MRS. M. It's all ready. Have you all met Miss Ransom?
JERRY. I introduced her all round.
MRS. M. Trust you for that, Jerry.
JERRY. It's all you would trust me for, Mrs. McGreevy.
MRS. M. Trust nobody, say I, and then you won't get your fingers burnt.

(*Enter* MR. GRUMP, 2. *He is greeted by everybody.*)

MR. G. Horrible night out.
TOM. I thought it was bully.
FELICIA. It was delightfully pleasant.
MR. G. A beastly wind.
MR. S. What's this got to do with dinner?
MRS. M. Come and sit down.

(*All go up to table and take places.* (*See scene plot.*) MR. S. *immediately starts eating crackers, radishes, pickles, etc.*)

JERRY. Wherever are the Wigginses to-night?
MRS. M. They all went to a church supper.
MR. G. Well, that is a worse place.
MRS. M. They get no reduction.
MR. S. All the more for us.
MRS. M. No, I knew they wasn't coming.
TOM. Guess I'll sit over on that side.

MRS. M. No, I can't charge 'em for dinner unless I reserves their seats for 'em.

MR. G. They'll want a lunch when they come home—from a church supper.

MRS. M. It'll be extra. (*Rings bell sharply.*) Amanda!

AMANDA (*entering* 6). Yes'm.

MRS. M. Not yes'm. Soup!

AMANDA. Yes'm.

JERRY. What, soup again!

MRS. M. Certainly, a first-class table de hoty always has soup.

TOM. Sure, it's Wednesday night.

MRS. M. (*sharply*). Well, what of it?

TOM. Oyster soup. (*Enter* AMANDA *with bowls of soup on tray.*) January, February, March, April, always on Wednesday oyster soup except in the summer.

(MR. S. *stops* AMANDA *and takes bowl of soup and starts eating at once. The others as served eat at once except* GENEVIEVE, *who politely waits. Exit* AMANDA *to reënter with more bowls of soup. Before all are served* MR. S. *finishes his first bowl and takes the one intended for* MR. O.)

MR. G. Colder'n church charity.

TOM. I call this imaginary soup.

MRS. M. (*sharply*). Imaginary?

TOM. Yes, an X-ray fails to reveal the presence of a bivalve.

JERRY. You should be provided.

(*He takes a small package from his pocket and reveals an oyster.*)

TOM. Lend him to me.

JERRY. How much am I offered?

FELICIA. Isn't that Jerry Farraway the comicallest fellow?

MRS. M. He's too smart. Let me catch him owing me ——

MR. O. Please, may I have soup?

MRS. M. (*glowering*). Soup has been served, Mr. Owen.

MR. O. I didn't get any.

MRS. M. (*to* AMANDA, *who is removing plates*). Amanda, did you bring soup for Mr. Owen?

AMANDA. Yes'm.

MRS. M. There are no second helpings of soup, Mr. Owen.

(MR. S. *is busy again with bread, crackers, pickles, etc.*)

TOM. You know I said it was imaginary soup, Owen.

FELICIA. I think Mrs. McGreevy makes such lovely soup.

JERRY. By proxy.

MRS. M. No, by Amanda.

MR. G. Humph.

GENEVIEVE. I don't seem very hungry to-night.

MR. S. (*aside to* MR. O.). That's good.

MRS. M. I'm sorry, because we have such a exemplary table de hoty. Everybody says we set a magnificent table.

JERRY. Solid mahogany.

MRS. M. What?

JERRY. The table.

FELICIA. Isn't he comical?

MRS. M. You'll give Miss Ransom a wrong impression.

JERRY. Oh, I wouldn't for the world. This is a lovely place.

TOM. Of course, I don't expect to stay here long. When a man gets to be somebody, well, he's got to be somebody, that's all.

JERRY. As for me, I'm thankful for my angular construction. (*Reaches half across table for bread.*)

MR. S. It's keeping busy that counts.

MR. G. Humph.

(*During the above* AMANDA *has been bringing in the plates with meat, potatoes.* MR. S. *again gets the first plate.*)

JERRY. What is the meat order to-night, Mr. Swallow?

MR. S. I haven't had time to find out. (*Eats rapidly.*)

MRS. M. It's roast tenderloin beef.

MR. O. Why, mine tastes like fried ham.

MRS. M. Yours may. Roast tenderloin beef is the meat order.

(MR. O. *subsides.*)

JERRY. I think I could articulate some Wor-ces-ter-shire sauce.

MR. S. (*pouring the last drop*). There ain't a bit left, Jerry.

TOM. You seem to think, Mr. Swallow, that Worcestershire sauce is a beverage. Not so. 'Tis a condiment.

MR. S. It's something to eat. That's all I care.

MRS. M. (*shouting toward door* 4). Amanda, 'nother bottle o' Wooster.

MR. O. Please may I have some more ——

MRS. M. Mr. Owen!

MR. O. Oh, I see I haven't finished.

(*Nibbles at a small piece.*)

TOM. Mrs. McGreevy, I wonder if you heard me telling the folks I got another boost?

MRS. M. Another?

TOM. Yep, another twenty—assistant to the general manager now, and I know more about the business than he does ——

FELICIA. You do? Isn't that wonderful?

TOM. Yes, they all say I do. Why, if he shouldn't show up again, the work'd go on just the same exactly—only better.

MRS. M. They're very good to you, Tom.

TOM (*scornfully*). Good? They're lucky to keep me. Why, I scarcely get a mail down there but some one offers me a job. Why, you know these days there's scarcely anything a smart fellow can't do. The demand for brains was never so great.

FELICIA. It's just perfectly lovely.

TOM. Well, on January first, I'm going to put it up to them straight and if they don't come over with another big boost, I'm going where I'm appreciated. It'll have to be another twenty or out I get.

FELICIA. Dear me, you'll be so rich you won't want to stay here.

MR. G. Humph.

MR. S. One less mouth ——

TOM. Oh, a little bachelor apartment at the Washingtonia'd be about right. You got to keep up appearances.

MRS. M. Well, I hope you won't leave us, Tom. Have another chop, won't you? Amanda, Amanda, bring Mr. Headley another chop.

AMANDA. Yes'm, but it ain't a chop.

MRS. M. Beef, I mean—beef medium.

MR. O. I'd like ——

MRS. M. I'm sorry, but we're all out of it.

MR. O. I'd like a glass of water.

MRS. M. Amanda, when you have waited on everybody, get Mr. Owen a glass of water.

MR. G. This is the worst meal I ever had but once ——

JERRY (*pleasantly*). When was the once?

MR. G. One day when I was too busy to eat anything. Tenderloin beef! Tougher'n a gang o' rowdies on election night.

MRS. M. (*sternly*). D'you realize, Mr. Grump, that folks can be sued for slander?

MR. G. (*running his knife in vain across his meat*). Can't cut it. Cut prices are the only cut in connection with this meat.

JERRY (*concernedly*). Can I lend you an axe?

MR. G. An axe? On a piece of meat this size? Now if some one only had a real sharp chisel ——

TOM. Wouldn't a bore do?

MR. G. It might. Why?

TOM. Use yourself then.

MR. G. Humph.

MRS. M. I shall insist upon an apology.

MR. G. Humph.

JERRY. D'you know what Mr. Lembkin told me just before dinner?

(*All are attentive except* MR. S., *who continues eating rapidly.* MR. L. *and* MISS L. *are embarrassed.*)

MR. L. Oh, let up.

JERRY. I cannot conceal the truth. I cannot stand by and see a woman trifled with.

MRS. M. Not at a first-class boarding-house.

JERRY. Mr. Lembkin confessed that he had no use for marriage and such nonsense.

VOICES. Oh!

JERRY. Well may you say "Oh." I had caught him red-handed in the act of heaping sentimental attentions upon a fair lady.

MISS L. Oh, keep still ——

JERRY. The fair lady reveals herself. Yes, 'twas no other. Upon my calling our erring brother to task, he

angrily, aye, very angrily, asserted that he had no time for marriage or any such nonsense. Now I ask of you in all honesty and candor, what punishment fits such a crime?

VOICES. No dessert.

MR. S. That's what I say. Let his dessert go to the one who gets through his own first.

JERRY. No, that would never do.

TOM. Why not?

JERRY. Because when a man has done wrong, he should receive his deserts—his just deserts.

MR. S. Don't make it plural, Jerry.

TOM. D'you know, the other day I found Mr. Lembkin reading Browning, and yesterday I saw Miss Loveman with it.

JERRY. The same copy?

TOM. The same copy.

JERRY. Kindly notice, ladies and gentlemen, the same copy. Caught red-handed reading Browning. Was it Robert or Mrs.?

TOM. I guess it was Robert.

JERRY. It's all the same—sentimental literature of some sort. Marked passages and all that sort of thing. Why, Tom, it's a regular lovers' correspondence. Mark a passage and pass the book. Saves postage and avoids suspicion.

MR. L. I never marked ——

JERRY (*shaking a finger*). Ah, then, you have written letters—compromising letters. I think a committee should be appointed to investigate. Amanda for chairman. She's got access to the rooms and a stand-in with the postman.

(*During the above,* MR. S. *has been voraciously eating everything he could lay his hands on.* AMANDA *has been refilling his plate several times.* GENEVIEVE *has been nibbling uninterestedly.* JERRY *reaches half across the table whenever he wishes anything.*)

MRS. M. You're the worst tease I ever saw, Jerry Farraway. You have spoiled Mr. Lembkin's dinner.

JERRY (*innocently*). Me? Oh, no, not I. 'Tis either an uneasy conscience or the ecstasy of love. Take your choice.

TOM. And they're so well suited.

JERRY. Suited? I should say so. They both go in for opera. Vogner is a particular diversion.

FELICIA. I just adore Vogner.

GENEVIEVE. He is nice.

MR. G. Humph.

MR. S. I'd rather have a good dinner.

MR. G. Yes, a real good dinner.

JERRY. Both of 'em hate vaudeville. Both of 'em read poetry. Neither looks at a Sunday newspaper.

TOM. Both like roast beef.

MR. S. I should say so—worse luck.

JERRY. Neither eats fish.

MR. S. Good thing on Friday.

TOM. And they're so much alike ——

JERRY. Such beautiful dispositions ——

MR. G. Humph.

MR. L. What d'you mean by that?

MR. G. I was humphing at this meat, not at you.

JERRY. There isn't a doubt but they are strictly compatible.

FELICIA. I do hope there'll be a romance. It will be just exquisite.

GENEVIEVE (*dabbling with her food*). I don't seem to be very hungry.

MR. S. (*aside to* MR. O.). Good.

GENEVIEVE. If you don't mind, I'll finger my music.

MRS. M. (*graciously*). Certainly, my dear.

JERRY. Are your fingers clean?

MRS. M. Don't be impertinent, Jerry; remember she's a new boarder.

GENEVIEVE. If Amanda could bring me a finger-bowl ——

MRS. M. Amanda, Amanda, a finger-bowl for one.

AMANDA. Yes'm.

(*Exit*, 6. *Enter* AMANDA *with finger-bowl.*)

(GENEVIEVE *daintily touches her finger tips to the water and proceeds to piano where she starts playing in very fast time. The jaws begin to work rapidly, and everybody is eating at a mile-a-minute clip.*)

JERRY. Oh, new boarder, new boarder, be merciful. Are you in cahoots with the doctor? You will give us all the indigestion.

GENEVIEVE. Am I playing too fast?

JERRY. You make me swallow my food whole.

MR. G. Less chance to know how poor it tastes.

TOM. When I eat I eat, and when I fast I fast, but I don't want to eat fast.

FELICIA. Isn't he the funniest man?

JERRY. You said I was.

FELICIA. You both are.

GENEVIEVE. How is this, then?

(*She plays a pronounced andante movement, whereupon everybody eats with the greatest deliberation, pausing a full minute between mouthfuls.*)

AMANDA. Yes'm. What are they eating so slow like? This is my night off.

JERRY. I've got a date myself. And Lembkin and Miss Loveman'll be late for their engagement.

GENEVIEVE (*tearfully*). You don't like my playing.

JERRY (*protesting*). I do, too. I always like music with my meals. Give us a bunch of rag-time.

GENEVIEVE. I don't know any.

JERRY. Some on the piano.

TOM. Or a love-song. Mr. Lembkin likes love-songs.

FELICIA. Yes, let's have a love-song.

GENEVIEVE. Would you like this—"Mother's the Grand Old Girl"?

JERRY. Dedicated to Mrs. McGreevy.

TOM. She sure is the G. O. G.

MRS. M. The G. O. G.?

TOM. Yep, the grand old girl.

MRS. M. She is, if your board bill's paid regular.

(GENEVIEVE *plays very quietly.*)

TOM. I took a flyer in Oshkosh Limited to-day. Bought it at 54. It'll be up to 60 in a week. Net me $600.00. Buy a little runabout. I tell you the stock market's the stuff if you know what you're about.

MRS. M. Keep enough for board bill.

JERRY. And car fare.

MR. S. More bread, please.

MRS. M. Amanda, Amanda, more bread.

AMANDA. Yes'm. I brung more bread.

(*Goes out and brings bread.*)

JERRY. I don't like these bakers.

MRS. M. Why not?

JERRY. They're loafers, every one of them.

FELICIA. Isn't he the funniest man?

(*Exit* AMANDA.)

TOM. They make money, though.

MRS. M. How do you know?

TOM. Every one of them has made his roll.

FELICIA. You do say the cutest things.

TOM. They say down to the office that I am very witty.

FELICIA. Witty? Why, you're just comical.

TOM. If it wasn't for my prospects in business, I'd go on the stage.

FELICIA. They do tell me actors get two hundred dollars a week.

TOM (*scornfully*). What's two hundred a week?

MRS. M. (*sardonically*). It'd pay your laundry bills.

MR. L. (*to* MISS L.). Would you like some more bread?

MISS L. Yes, thank you.

JERRY. See, everybody, how attentive Mr. Lembkin is. He asked Miss Loveman if she wanted any more bread.

MR. O. I'd like——

MRS. M. It's all gone, every bit.

JERRY. The idea of one boarder asking another if he or she wants anything! It shows a special interest.

TOM. It's against all nature.

MR. S. (*helping himself to bread*). It's every man for himself.

JERRY (*reaching half across the table for a pickle*). And the victory to the fellow with the longest reach.

TOM. They've got me down for a speech before the Chamber of Commerce next month. Subject, "How I Won Out." If it makes a hit, I'm going all over the country delivering it. A good after-dinner speaker gets a hundred every time he opens his mouth. And I could hold down my little old job between times.

MR. S. Is the meat all gone?

MRS. M. Amanda, Amanda!

(*Enter* AMANDA.)

AMANDA. Yes'm.

MRS. M. More meat for Mr. Swallow.

TOM. Me, too.
JERRY. Me, too.

(*Exit* AMANDA.)

MR. S. Don't forget I asked first.
FELICIA. Did any of you folks see "Way Up North"? It's the loveliest play.
MISS L. I never attend any but Shakespeare.
MR. L. Neither do I.

(*Enter* AMANDA, *with meat, which she passes around.*)

JERRY. I told you. Something else you agree about.
FELICIA. I don't care. "Way Up North" is the most perfectly lovely play I've seen in a long, long time. The hero is such a fine man; so brave, so courageous, and ——
TOM. And so handsome.
FELICIA. Well, he is handsome. I just kept wondering whether he's as lovely off the stage. And the villain is perfectly awful. There isn't anything that man wouldn't do. He took that lovely, lovely girl—the heroine, I mean—and threw her right down on her hands.
JERRY. It doesn't hurt her, Felicia. She does it a dozen times a week.
FELICIA. I don't care. Any man that acts that way even in a play must be just like it himself.
TOM. Most likely the heroine's married to him, eh, Jerry?
JERRY. Most likely. It's all the thing now for heroines to be married to villains.
FELICIA. Well, I hope she gets a divorce. Anyway, I wouldn't miss seeing it if the seats were thirty-five cents in the gallery.
JERRY. Better take Miss Loveman, Mr. Lembkin.
MR. L. I only attend Shakespeare.
FELICIA. Some of Shakespeare's are just horrid. One of them had in it all about skulls and grave-diggers. Ugh!
MR. O. I wonder if I could have ——
MRS. M. (*firmly*). I'm sorry, but it is all gone. Amanda, clear the things.
AMANDA. Yes'm.
MR. S. I'm not through. I want more bread. Jerry, reach me a piece.

JERRY (*reaching across table*). Everybody should reach for himself.

TOM. You mean each should reach for themselves.

JERRY (*with a wave of the hand*). As you will.

(AMANDA *clears the dishes, exits and enters with pie during the conversation.*)

TOM. The fellows had a little bowling match last night. I averaged 215 for six games. Broke all the season's records for the alleys. Gee, strike after strike. After the first game, the others wanted to call it off. I offered to spot any one of them fifty pins, but nothing doing.

MR. L. Whatever are you talking about, Tom?

MISS L. Yes, what do you mean?

JERRY. They don't understand bowling. Another thing they're alike about. Gee, you would make a good couple.

MISS L. Jerry!

TOM. Any fellow with brains ought to be able to knock over ten pins the first shot. I like bowling next to tennis. You know I'm going to play for the state tennis championship next June. The sporting editor of the "Gazette" says my volley shots are wonderful. Next thing they'll want moving pictures of me in action.

FELICIA. It must be wonderful to be a hero.

TOM. Whatever I've done, I'm thankful it hasn't turned my head. If there's anything I hate, it's to see a fellow forever talking about what he's done. Take Binks, down to the office. He's always saying "I did this," "I did that" until you get weary.

(AMANDA *gives* MR. G. *his pie.*)

MR. G. Pie, pie, forever pie.

FELICIA (*to* TOM). It must be annoying.

TOM. Whenever you try to tell anybody about anything you've done, he's interrupting with something he's done.

MR. G. One thing certain—this pie's not done.

MR. S. I'll eat your piece if you don't want it.

MR. G. Got to try to make a meal somehow. Take your choice—indigestion or starvation.

JERRY. I disagree with you, Mr. Grump.

MR. G. So does the pie.

FELICIA. He, he, he. I've just thought of the cutest thing.

MR. L. What is it?

JERRY. Yes, let us in on it.

FELICIA. I always thought Mrs. McGreevy kept a respectable, temperance place.

MRS. M. (*sharply*). Show me the one who says I don't.

FELICIA. He, he, he, but you have Tom and Jerry right at the table. (*Giggles.*)

JERRY. Henceforth evermore please refer to me as Jerome.

TOM. And to me as Thomas or Mr. Headley. A fellow in my position ought to be Mr.

JERRY. I don't care what they say, Mrs. McGreevy, this is good pie.

MRS. M. Thank you.

JERRY. Can you make as good pie as this, Felicia?

FELICIA (*confused*). It depends upon the sort of man that was the inspiration.

TOM. Speak up, Jerry.

MR. L. Yes, Jerry, now's your chance.

JERRY. Not before all you folks. How about you, Miss Loveman?

MISS L. Me?

JERRY. Yes. Can you make good apple pie?

MISS L. I can, with good ingredients.

JERRY. The chances are good, Mr. Lembkin, for bad apple pie means indigestion and indigestion means bad temper and bad temper means a storm on the matrimonial sea.

MR. G. Humph.

MRS. M. My, what bad cooks most of 'em must be.

JERRY. You are a pessimist, Mrs. McGreevy. Now, if I was to ask a girl to marry me, first thing I'd do, I'd up and ask her if she could make good apple pie ——

MRS. M. You did ask Felicia.

FELICIA (*gurgling and confused*). Oh, Mrs. McGreevy.

GENEVIEVE. I hope you have liked my music.

JERRY. It's been delightful.

MR. G. Humph.

JERRY. Before we finally part for the various social engagements of the evening, I wonder if Mr. Lembkin has anything to say to the assembled guests.

MR. L. Certainly not.

JERRY. Well, you will soon.

MRS. M. Before we go maybe Miss Ransom would sing us something.

JERRY. Do you know "Just a Little Heart That's All Your Own"?

GENEVIEVE. No, I——

JERRY. Mr. Lembkin thinks it is very touching.

GENEVIEVE. I can sing "Only One Girl In the World For Me."

TOM. Don't. I hate these restrictions.

GENEVIEVE. What shall I sing then?

ALL. Whatever you like.

(GENEVIEVE *sings some pretty present-day ballad, and is applauded.*)

MRS. M. You will be quite an addition to our little circle, my dear.

GENEVIEVE. If my appetite were only better.

MR. S. Let well enough alone, say I.

MR. G. Humph.

JERRY. Well, I for one have got to be moving along.

TOM. Same with me.

(*The various boarders exeunt* 1 *and* 2. JERRY *whispers to one and another, except* MR. L. *and* MISS L., *as they exeunt.* MRS. M. *draws curtains together, concealing the dining-room. Great clatter of dishes heard.* MR. L. *and* MISS L. *lag behind.*)

MRS. M. Amanda, Amanda!

(*After a moment* AMANDA'S *head appears at curtain.*)

AMANDA. Yes'm.

MRS. M. What's all this racket?

AMANDA. Hurrying the dishes, ma'am. My night off.

MRS. M. Well, less noise, please.

(*Exit,* 2.)

MISS L. Didn't they tease us something terrible?

MR. L. They did. I'm getting tired of it.

MISS L. Be careful. Somebody will see us now.

MR. L. What could they say worse than they have said already?

MISS L. Nothing. We must put a stop to it.

MR. L. That's it, a stop to it.

MISS L. But how?

MR. L. But how?

MISS L. That's what I say, but how?

MR. L. There must be a way out.

MISS L. It was so absurd.

MR. L. What was?

MISS L. Why, everything Jerry Farraway said.

MR. L. Well, what did he say?

MISS L. He said you and I both liked the opera ——

MR. L. Well, we do, don't we?

MISS L. Yes, but ——

MR. L. And we both hate vaudeville.

MISS L. And we both hate Sunday newspapers, as far as that goes.

MR. L. And we do love poetry—especially Browning. Maybe Jerry isn't altogether wrong.

MISS L. As he said, we do just happen to like roast beef, both of us.

MR. L. Maybe as Jerry was really right about so much, he was right about it all.

MISS L. (*faltering*). Right! What do you mean? Such a fool as Jerry Farraway never was heard of.

MR. L. (*earnestly*). Oh, he was fooling, all right. But you know "many a truth spoken in jest." Back of all his nonsense a truth does stand out—our tastes are similar, our inclinations run parallel lines; in a word we are congenial.

MISS L. Why, Mr. Lembkin, what are you getting at?

MR. L. Just this—what he said as a joke let us make a reality. He jestingly said that our common qualities fitted us for each other. Let us ask ourselves in earnest—isn't it true? In a word, my dear Miss Loveman, will you marry me?

MISS L. You? Why, you—you're a woman-hater.

MR. L. Positively, I am not. I am a woman-lover—not in general, but one in particular.

MISS L. Why, I ——

MR. L. You can't say it's so sudden, after all of Jerry's fooling.

MISS L. I know, but I never ——

MR. L. We should be happy—our tastes are so much alike.

MISS L. Yes, I think we should ——

MR. L. Then it's "yes."

MISS L. If you really wish it.

(MR. L. *moves to kiss her.* JERRY'S *head appears through the curtain,* 4.)

JERRY. Ho, ho, ha, ha. A pretty situation for a man who doesn't believe in marriage or any of that nonsense.

MR. L. I have changed my mind.

JERRY. Ho, ho, then it's a case for the minister?

(MR. L. *looks appealingly to* MISS L.)

MISS L. In good time.

JERRY. Then let's tell the whole crowd. (*He pulls the curtains and reveals all the other boarders seated in the dining-room. They laugh heartily and come down, crowding around* MISS L. *and* MR. L., 1. JERRY *and* MRS. M. *are* 4, FELICIA *down* 2.) Mr. Lembkin's a cunning old fox.

MISS L. He is not a fox.

JERRY. No doubt you think he's a deer.

MRS. M. I hope you won't let getting married make no difference with your staying here.

MR. L. Oh, I presume we shall keep house.

MRS. M. (*calling off at door up* 6). Amanda, be sure we have some "rooms for rent" signs handy when we need 'em.

GENEVIEVE. I think it's just lovely to have this little romance happen the very first night I came.

FELICIA. It's just too perfectly romantic. It's better than any novel Bertha Clay ever wrote. I just think it's magnificently beautiful.

TOM. Well, let's adjourn and give the happy couple a chance to enjoy the sweetness of love's young dream.

FELICIA. Isn't Tom the comicallest thing?

JERRY (*coming down* 2 *to* FELICIA). Shall I tell 'em our happy secret?

FELICIA. I don't care. Oh, folks, isn't it delicious!

JERRY. You see, I met Felicia on the stairs, and ——

VOICES. Ah, ah, young man.

MR. G. Humph.

JERRY. And I asked her the eternal question.

GENEVIEVE. What eternal question?

JERRY. What kind o' apple pie she can make. Folks, allow me to introduce the future Mrs. Jerry Farraway.

(FELICIA *bows grandiloquently. As the curtain descends,* MRS. M. *mournfully holds up four fingers, signifying her four lost boarders;* JERRY *has* FELICIA *in his arms,* 2, *and* MR. L. *has an arm around* MISS L., 1. MRS. M. *is* 4. *The others show lively interest.* AMANDA *at rear, wiping her eyes with a dish-towel.*)

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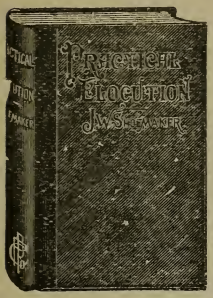

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